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Intelligence Report

Neo-Stalinism: Writing History and Making Policy

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INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Neo-Stalinism: Writing History and Making Policy

Summary

Since the spring of 1965, the Soviet leaders, proceeding gingerly and obliquely, have rehabilitated Stalin's historical image. Official guidelines have defined Stalin's successes in industry, agriculture, culture, ideology, and war. The cult of personality and the purges are still disapproved, but only in footnotes to the historical record. Historians, memorialists, and literary men propagating this positive image have largely replaced critics of Stalin who flourished in the public forums under Khrushchev.

Stalin's rehabilitation has been accompanied in the political sphere by reversion to practices reminiscent of his rule. The regime has sought to refashion the party as an elite ruling body that stands above other interests and imposes its will upon them according to the orthodox precepts of Marxism-Leninism. The government administration has been recentralized, and the police have become more active. On the propaganda level, the regime has sounded in heavy tones the twin themes of vigilance toward the West and of Soviet patriotism. By a slow but steady twisting of arms, culture has been made to conform to the official strictures, forcing reformers to turn increasingly to

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such unofficial means of protest as petitions and demonstrations. The Soviet leaders have nevertheless not reverted to two extremes of Stalin's rule, one-man dictatorship and mass terror. For this reason, their policy deserves the label "neo-Stalinist" rather than "Stalinist."

The regime's desire for legitimacy probably underlines the drive to rehabilitate Stalin, and its own collective nature seems to have encouraged conservative policies. These two tendencies have become mutually reinforcing. The reformers' major weapon to force change, criticism of policies as "Stalinist," has been denied them. Meanwhile, the conservatives have been busy invoking Stalin and his record to ensure "more of the same." Although the Soviet leaders have not been unanimous on all issues, they have stood more united than divided behind both the rehabilitation and the conservative trend. Brezhnev's hand has been especially evident, and he has undoubtedly gained the most from these developments.

The ascendancy of neo-Stalinism does not necessarily portend the eventual emergence of full-fledged Stalinism. The present leaders seem to realize the danger this would bring upon themselves and the damage it would cause the country. Reaction will probably continue, however, at least until the next change of men at the top. The near future will probably see a consolidation of present achievements, that is, fleshing out a favorable portrait of Stalin and a more extensive and thorough application of Stalinist principles to current policy.

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I. Image Refurbished

1. Nikita Khrushchev, by his own blows and those he inspired others to deliver, had by the end of his rule succeeded in thoroughly blackening Stalin's historical image. Stalin still lived in political and cultural dialogue in the Soviet Union, but only as the embodiment of wrong by which to measure right. Mention of any positive role that he had played had ceased by 1964.

2. Under the present regime, Stalin's battered image has undergone a regeneration in the public forum. Political leaders, official representatives, writers, and memorialists have all had a hand in the process. Derogatory statements about Stalin have become rare and restricted, while praise of most of his career is now recurrent. Although Stalin's image has not regained all of the idealized and mystical glow that it once had, it has officially shed most of its scars and has attained respectability.

First Efforts Bring Protest

3. The twentieth anniversary of the end of the war celebrated on 8 May 1965 provided the occasion for the first neutral, if not favorable, public utterances on Stalin's behalf. During the month preceding the anniversary, articles appeared in the central press, most of them signed by military leaders, discussing the economic and military preparations made before the war, Stalin's leadership of the war effort, and his participation in planning military strategy. These articles alleged that some writers had been overly critical in their treatment of Stalin. Leonid Brezhnev seemed to countenance this new look at Stalin in his anniversary speech on 8 May, when he referred to Stalin as the chairman of the wartime State Committee for Defense, the first reference to Stalin by a member of the new leadership.

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4. Positive and negative comments about Stalin alternated in the press, but Brezhnev's remark was followed by other signs of high-level approval of the former Soviet leader. On 29 June 1965 the Georgian party First Secretary, Vasily Mzhavanadze, dignified a dictum of Stalin's by referring to it as "Leninist" in a speech to the Georgian Central Committee. Sergey Trapeznikov, head of the CPSU Central Committee's Science and Education Department and probably a protégé of Brezhnev, argued in Pravda on 8 October that, because the cult of personality did not arise from the nature of Communism, works that concentrated on this aspect of the Stalin years were in error. Attention, he noted, must be given to the achievements of those years, including industrialization based on the primacy of heavy industry, collectivization of agriculture, the cultural revolution, the Constitution of victorious socialism, the defeat of Trotskyism and right-wing opportunism, and the conduct of the war. On 30 January 1966, three historians declared in Pravda that the term "period of the cult of personality" was "un-Marxist," that in no period did the negative aspects of Stalin's rule predominate.

5. These efforts to enhance Stalin's image agitated intellectual circles in Moscow. During the V-E Day preparations in April 1965, rumors circulated that Central Committee Secretary Petr Demichev, who oversees ideology, had called for a more balanced treatment of Stalin. It was also rumored that Brezhnev and Politburo member Mikhail Suslov had disagreed on the subject, with Suslov allegedly contending that he, Suslov, was too deeply committed to de-Stalinization. [redacted] the subject was a major issue of contention within the leadership before the Central Committee plenum in September 1965. By early 1966 the story was abroad that a full rehabilitation of Stalin would be attempted at the 23rd Party Congress in March. Shortly before the Congress opened, twenty-five leading intellectuals addressed an appeal to Brezhnev warning of the dire effects Stalin's rehabilitation would have in the Soviet Union and the world Communist movement.

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6. At the Congress, Brezhnev did not mention Stalin, a sign perhaps of indecision among the leaders. Nikolay Podgorny stood out as the one speaker who praised the party's achievements in "the elimination of the harmful dregs in connection with the personality cult." Podgorny's position within the leadership, however, had been weakened in late 1965 when he was made chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. He replaced Anastas Mikoyan, a champion of de-Stalinization under Khrushchev, who left the leadership entirely. The eclipse of Mikoyan and Podgorny probably helped to open the way to the subsequent progress of rehabilitation.

New Look Becomes Official

7. Instead of a formal declaration, the Soviet leadership has resorted to disguised and piecemeal measures to make the rehabilitation official. Brezhnev again mentioned Stalin, making a passing reference to him as a Georgian revolutionary, in a speech he delivered in Tbilisi in Georgia on 1 November 1966. Stalin also received favorable mention in a speech by the Armenian party first secretary and in a book by the Georgian party second secretary during early 1967.

8. A number of documents have elaborated on the guidelines for historians laid down by Trapeznikov and, in effect, have made them official. These documents include the Theses of the Central Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Revolution, an article on historiography in the Central Committee's theoretical journal Kommunist No. 3, 1969, and a biography of Stalin in a volume of memoirs about Lenin compiled by the Central Committee's Institute of Marxism-Leninism. The burden of these articles is that the mistakes of Stalin were minimal and should be swept under the carpet of glorious deeds accomplished by him and the party. Because the party corrected violations of collective leadership, party life, and "socialist legality" in 1956, the subject is now closed. Moreover, the articles continue, Stalin's struggle against so-called Trotskyites, right opportunists, and bourgeois nationalists was correct, thus clouding the issue of the purges and the later

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rehabilitation of their victims. Stalin's inspirational leadership of the war effort overshadows any mistakes made in preparation for war, and also to Stalin's credit are collectivization, industrialization, the victory of socialism in the USSR, and the formation of the world socialist system. His works are now recommended to historians as source material. The article on historiography was signed by, among others, V. Golikov, thought to be a personal aide to Brezhnev. It closes with a ringing quote from Brezhnev on the need for unflinching loyalty to Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

9. Demichev indicated his approval of this effort to brighten Soviet history when, in Kommunist No. 10, 1968, he complained of the nihilistic moods engendered among youth by "the blackening of the historical past." The only discordant note on the issue from the leadership was sounded by Suslov on 25 March 1969 at a meeting celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Comintern, when he criticized Stalin's attitude in the early 1930s toward Social Democrats.

Reinterpretation Spreads

10. The official reinterpretation of Stalin has been imposed on the history written by academics and memorialists. The professional historians did not submit without a fight, however, which came to center on A. M. Nekrich's book entitled June 22, 1941, published by the Academy of Sciences in 1965. At a conference of historians in 1966 organized to censure the book, the critics were held off by the strength of those who supported Nekrich in his view that Stalin was to blame for the USSR's initial military defeats in WW II. It was not until the summer of 1967 that Nekrich's opponents prevailed. He was expelled from the party, and in August the journal Problems of History of the CPSU published the first vicious attack on his book. Meanwhile, Stalin's reputation as a wartime leader was being advanced without opposition in memoirs by his military collaborators, including Marshals Grechko, Konev, Meretskov, Rokossovsky, and Zhukov, General Shtemenko, Colonel General Yakovlev, and Admiral Kuznetsov. Lest the message of these memoirs be lost on anyone, Kommunist No. 2, 1969, carried a review of five of them, concluding that they show Stalin, "for all the complexity of his character, as an outstanding military leader."

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11. Closely tied to the historical image of Stalin is the matter of rehabilitating his victims. Khrushchev had taken the process to a point just short of exonerating Nikolay Bukharin, a leading advocate of a non-Stalinist program of Soviet development. Under Khrushchev's successors, the publication of memorial biographies of purgees has dwindled, and it has become the general practice to delete all mention of the circumstances of death or to note only that a certain life was "tragically interrupted." The Golikov article in Kommunist No. 3 of this year went still further and specifically rescinded one rehabilitation by name.

12. By 1968 Stalin's activities in the economic field began to receive fuller treatment. The newly published memoirs of former Armaments Minister B. L. Vannikov and of the aircraft designer A. S. Yakovlev portrayed Stalin as the competent director of industries vital to the war. Ironically, different extracts of Vannikov's memoirs had been published in 1962 with the aim of giving the opposite impression. Former Finance Minister A. G. Zverev, in a portion of his memoirs printed in early 1969, concluded that, although Stalin was not without faults, "yet I tend to evaluate his direction of financial activity very highly." The reminiscences of others of Stalin's deputies in economic affairs are reportedly being prepared for publication. Socialist Industry in July 1969 carried the recollections of hero worker Ivan Gudov, who invoked the memory of the Stakhanovite movement of production heroes and the popular adulation that surrounded Stalin. Gudov recalled his awe, at the Eighteenth Party Congress in 1939, at Stalin's cool assessment of the prospering Soviet economy and its problems and his ability to focus attention on vital questions such as production of automatic machine tools.

13. A number of conservative journals spearheaded Stalin's comeback in the literary world. In the patriotic atmosphere of the 1967 anniversary, Moskva No. 10 carried a poem by Sergey Smirnov that became notorious for its passages of servile homage to Stalin. Two poems by Feliks Chuyev in Oktyabr

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No. 1, 1968, called for a restoration of Stalin's honor. Oktyabr took the next logical step in June by carrying A. Grebenshchikov's call for the republication of earlier novels, poems, and plays that glorified Stalin. He especially saw the need to revive the three historical novels written by Valentin Kostylev about Ivan the Terrible, a convenient historical model for Stalin. These efforts met considerable opposition in Literaturnaya Gazeta, organ of the USSR Writers Union, and the liberal journal Novy Mir. Two establishment writers, Aleksandr Chakovsky, chief editor of Literaturnaya Gazeta, and Mikhail Sholokov, winner of the Nobel Prize for the novel Quiet Flows the Don, attempted to treat Stalin in major works of literature. In so doing, however, they did not go as far as the historians in covering up Stalin's misdeeds. In his historical novel Blockade published in late 1968, Chakovsky balanced Stalin's days of panic at the beginning of the war and the harm caused by his egotism against his accomplishments in mobilizing the country to achieve ultimate victory. Similarly, in the extracts of Sholokov's novel They Fought for the Fatherland, which appeared in Pravda in March 1969, any criticism of Stalin implicit in the treatment of the purges and prison camps was softened by directing the blame principally at Stalin's deputies for state security and by the hero's constant faith in the party.

The Balance and the Leadership

14. The Soviet dictum, being stringently enforced, that the positive is always more "real" than the negative ensures that the "balance" in interpretation weighs heavily in Stalin's favor. In effecting this transformation Brezhnev especially has shown his hand, and Demichev has occasionally appeared to act the role of spokesman. Disagreement within the leadership is indicated by the silence that most Soviet leaders have maintained and by the cautious and contradictory course that the rehabilitation has followed. Clear directions from the top have been absent. No doubt the leaders have felt opposing pressures from different interests within the Soviet Union and the Communist movement and have found it difficult to arrive at a "balance." The report that Suslov objected to the rehabilitation is supported

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only by the fact that he is the one member of the Politburo to have publicly criticized Stalin since the beginning of the process. By individually either encouraging or acquiescing in Stalin's rehabilitation, the current leaders must collectively stand as its authors.

II. Reversion of Policy

15. The shift toward Stalinist policies accelerated only after a period of many liberal tendencies in late 1964 and 1965 and after Podgorny and Mikoyan's positions had weakened. Since then the party and government have imposed a considerable and cumulative restriction on intellectual life and personal freedoms, have created a more rigid and orthodox ideological framework, and have returned to full centralization of the bureaucracy and a more active police power. The regime has, however, avoided two extreme elements of Stalin's rule, the personality cult of the leader and the use of mass terror. The aloofness and collectivity of the leadership obscure individual personalities and responsibilities. Tyranny may bear heavily on individual citizens but scarcely touches the masses because, however arbitrarily, only specific crimes are prosecuted and punishment is applied by process of law. Therefore, the current regime may more properly be called "neo-Stalinist" than "Stalinist."

The Party's Leading Role

16. The present leaders have worked against what they see as errors in the regimes of both Stalin and Khrushchev in party affairs. In place of the dictatorship of one man above the party, they have sought to reassert the dictatorship of the party itself. They have maintained a separation of the principal party and government offices, the General Secretary of the party and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and have preserved a genuine balance of power in the Politburo. The expression of party leadership by committee, however, has proved to be less dynamic and decisive than a one-man dictatorship. The leaders have tried to keep the interests of the party distinct from those of other groups in

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society so as to conserve the integrity of the party as an elite body above all others. They have, therefore, pulled back from the party of specialists that was forming under Khrushchev to a more restricted and professional party in the Leninist tradition. The result has been a re-emphasis of many of the principles of political control and ideology for which the era of Stalin is known.

17. Khrushchev's division of the party into agricultural and industrial sections was abolished, and the Twenty-third Party Congress in March 1966 took other measures to fit the party for its changed role. Khrushchev's formula, enshrined in the 1961 program, that the party was "of the whole people" was tacitly abandoned. It reverted, as under Stalin, to being the party of the "vanguard of the people"--the working class. Corresponding emphasis was laid on restricting membership, particularly in favor of workers. Amendments to the party statutes made it harder, especially for the young, to join the party and easier for lower party organs to expel members. The Twenty-third Party Congress also revoked Khrushchev's rule calling for the change-over of secretaries of party cells every two years. In the theoretical field, the regime has stressed the importance of Marxism-Leninism and, demonstrating its seriousness, has introduced full-time ideological refresher courses for party officials at the district level.

18. In the later Khrushchev years and immediately following his ouster, there was considerable public discussion concerning the withdrawal of the party from day-to-day administrative tasks. This policy was never put in practice however; on the contrary, the maintenance of a leading role for the party in all sectors of society has been given increasing emphasis. Early moves to improve the flow of information and communication inside the party and between the party and the people have also foundered. The Twenty-third Party Congress adopted a resolution to hold party conferences between Congresses in order to provide a wider forum than the Central Committee plenum. No such conference has yet been held. Politburo members have widely publicized the decisions of some of the plenums, but

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the effect has been weakened by the Stalinist bent for secrecy. The last central committee plenum for which a stenographic report was published was in March 1965, and the last at which some of the debate was published in the press was in September 1965. Since then only two of the main speeches have been published in full: those by Brezhnev on agriculture in May 1966 and in October 1968. Thus, the party's hand has not been lifted from society's back while the source of its direction has become more distant, dogmatic, and obscure.

Administration is Centralized

19. The current regime has reversed nearly all the measures that Khrushchev had designed to decentralize the machinery of administration. In September 1965 a central ministerial system replaced the regional councils of the national economy established in 1957. Since then the number of ministries has been gradually increasing. In August 1966 two union-republic ministries (central ministries supervising ministries in the republics) were established for the Preservation of Public Order and for Education.

20. The concentration of power in Moscow, along with other developments, has largely doomed the economic reforms of September 1965, which were supposed to free the hands of enterprise managers and to encourage rational decision making through use of economic indicators and incentives. The preservation of central planning, direction, supply distribution, and centralized determination of norms and prices has left little leeway for the enterprise manager. To the distress of republic and local officials, the return to the ministerial system has been accompanied by a decline in the attention given by planners to regional considerations. Finally, although the government still relies in practice on economic incentives to spur production, the party has been led by its ideological turn to place renewed stress on ideological incentives.

21. Another of Khrushchev's schemes to achieve Communism was to remove some administrative functions from direct control of the state. The measures he

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introduced were primarily in the legal sphere. They included the abolition of the Ministry of Justice, whose functions largely devolved to the courts, and the institution of "comrades courts" and civilian aides to the militia. Khrushchev also placed the organization of physical education and sports in the hands of public bodies. So far his successors have not reversed these changes except for replacing sports under state control. They have, however, discarded the rationale for carrying decentralization forward by arguing in theoretical articles that the state apparatus must retain its full powers until the point where Communism is achieved.

22. The police organs have enjoyed some increase in their authority. In November 1968 measures were introduced to raise the quality of the militia and improve its public image. These measures were accompanied by a return to the title Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) that had become notorious in the times of Stalin and Beria. The secret police (KGB) benefited from a decree of December 1965 increasing their powers of criminal investigation, by the appointment of a candidate member of the Politburo as KGB chairman in May 1967, and by the appointment of two KGB officers to the Supreme Court in October 1967.

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Vigilance and Patriotism

23. The regime has been particularly sensitive to the weakness of its ideological base when confronted with foreign example. At the Central Committee plenum in April 1968 Brezhnev prescribed a posture of vigilance toward the West, downgrading the concept of "peaceful coexistence" in favor of a more intense ideological struggle between the two world social systems. The result, best described as a "siege mentality," is similar to the attitude fostered by Stalin's theory of capitalist encirclement. Sharp campaigns against alleged Western propaganda and penetration have been unleashed, and "class criteria" are being used to discredit foreign influences and ideological revisions. The authorities have restored selective radio jamming and have

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discouraged contact of Soviet citizens with foreigners. The ultimate expression of this attitude, of course, was the use of troops in Czechoslovakia to crush that country's reform movement.

24. Another sign that the regime may doubt the inspirational effect of its message of Marxism-Leninism and "proletarian internationalism" is its simultaneous efforts to revive the intense patriotism of the war years. The authorities have organized a continuous parade of celebrations and publicity around the recurring anniversaries of revolutionary and wartime events. A complex of measures known as the "military-patriotic upbringing of youth" includes tours to battlefields, military classes in secondary schools, and more universal military service. Enveloping all is the effort to use the 100th Anniversary of Lenin's birth in 1970 to invoke him and his authority in almost supernatural terms.

Culture Succumbs

25. The atmosphere of neo-Stalinist indoctrination and regimentation has weighed perhaps most heavily and painfully on the cultural life of the Soviet Union. The new leadership of 1964 held out the promise of an end to the direct and arbitrary interference in the arts that Khrushchev had practiced and that was itself redolent of Stalinism. The editor of Pravda, Aleksey Rumyantsev, took advantage of the situation to publish in September 1965 an unusually liberal interpretation of the policy. He argued the need for intellectuals to expose shortcomings in Soviet life and said that talk about party guidance must not be used to cover up injunction in intellectual life. That same month, however, the regime demonstrated that its attitude toward intellectuals had toughened drastically. Rumyantsev was fired and two writers, Andrey Sinyavsky and Yuly Daniel, who had been smuggling their satirical works abroad under pseudonyms, were arrested. Their trial on charges of engaging in "anti-Soviet propaganda and agitation" and their seven- and five-year sentences to prison camps in February 1966 ended any illusions among the liberal intelligentsia that the regime now tolerated free expression.

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26. Since then the regime has succeeded in imposing, if not its positive injunctions, certainly its negative ones, on the intellectual world. Obvious tools in the process have been the writers' and artists' unions, and their internal party organizations. Censorship has had its deadening effect. It kept the works of Drabkin, Bek, and Solzhenitsyn out of the pages of Novy Mir even after their publication had been announced. Works giving less than flattering treatment to Soviet history or contemporary conditions or displaying a sympathy for ethnic or religious traditions were systematically denounced by defenders of "socialist realism." Calls came from officials for more heroic works about Lenin, revolutionary and war subjects, and the modern Soviet worker. In 1967, some of the more daring theaters sought to evade these strictures by staging modernized versions of classics, such as Chekhov's Three Sisters and Ostrovsky's A Remunerative Position, to comment on contemporary life. Only after considerable efforts were the authorities, including part of the Moscow party organization, able finally to tame the unorthodox journal Teatr and to ban the most controversial plays in the fall of 1968.

27. Conservatives in the cultural establishment have found this atmosphere propitious for engaging in particularly vicious attempts to discredit their rivals associated with liberal literary journals. The journal Yunost, after months of hounding by conservatives and rumors of changes, in July 1969 lost three prominent liberals, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Vasily Aksenov, and Viktor Rozov, from its editorial board. The one independently minded replacement, Anatoly Kuznetsov, soon defected to the West. The conservatives are now concentrating their fire on the last and still defiant refuge of the liberals, Novy Mir. In their heat they have raised again the charge of "cosmopolitanism," a label Stalin used against intellectuals and Jews in purges after the war.

28. Among the social sciences, history has suffered most under the new dispensation. A new Military History Institute was created under the Ministry of Defense in 1966 for the purpose of "exposing bourgeois falsifiers" and "propagandizing the heroic

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feats" of the Soviet armed forces. The Institute of History, apparently because of the recalcitrance of many of its members, lost its director in August 1967 and a year later was split into two Institutes, one for USSR History and one for General History. A Central Committee decree on the social sciences in August 1967 resulted in many changes in the organization of research and the system of institutions. The effectiveness of the measures, however, has been hampered by their contradictory aims: to improve knowledge of foreign countries and to counter bourgeois and revisionist ideas. The development of sociology still languishes for want of official approval. Hopes for radical economic discussion raised by the economic reform were dashed by conservatives who began to warn against "market socialism" and "anarcho-syndicalism" and to point to reforms in Eastern Europe. The natural sciences have been freer from interference. Lysenkoism was discredited after Khrushchev's fall, although its spokesmen have recently been finding their way into print again.

Protests and Persecution

29. As a result of this deadening policy, reformers who previously had tried to work within the system now find themselves outside it. Their literary arguments in the public press have been replaced by a protest movement concentrating on dramatizing constitutional rights by petitions to Soviet officials and international bodies and by occasional public demonstrations. The movement has attracted the support of famous figures in the arts and sciences, as well as hundreds of virtual unknowns, professional people, party members, and workers in various cities around the country. The protestors have broadcast their fears that the illegal repression of dissent threatens the country with a new era of Stalinist terror. Russian-centered activity has been paralleled by similar activity among national groups such as the Ukrainians and the Tatars and among religious organizations, and some attempts have been made to link all these causes in a broader struggle for justice.

30. The authorities have responded to this challenge with a variety of measures which, while

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often harsh, have fallen short of the massive and brutal solutions of Stalin. The principal activists were sent to prison or into exile after a series of trials in Moscow, Leningrad, and other cities. Others have been committed to mental hospitals. Probably over a hundred of those who lent their names to petitions have suffered loss of party membership, professional status, employment, or schooling. The regime has seemed particularly concerned to end the public nature of the protests and the attention they receive abroad. Although authorities had apparently achieved some success in muffling the voices of protest after March 1968, open dissent during the International Communist Conference in June 1969 proved that the measures being used had not solved the problem.

III. The Uses of Stalin

31. Stalin as a person and the system he represents loom so large in Soviet history that they remain the principal guidelines by which subsequent policies and modes of government are defined in the popular and official minds. This situation is reinforced by the fact that in political discussions Soviet practice so restricts direct debate over current policy that the use of other terms, especially historical, is required. As a result, official approval or disapproval of Stalin has been and is likely to continue to be an important signal of the direction of policy, toward reaction or reform.

The Conservative Impulse

32. The regime has found it desirable to repair Stalin's image probably for reasons of its own legitimacy and of public morale and order. The party has been at pains since it demoted Khrushchev to establish that it holds a continuous and dominant place in all periods of Soviet history as the advocate of socialist development according to the tenets of Marxism-Leninism. The horrendous crimes that Khrushchev charged to Stalin implied either the party's complicity or its abdication of authority. The party's leaders have in self-defense now sought to minimize those crimes, if not forget them.

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At the personal level, many officials had been in league with Stalin in carrying out his policies and were potentially compromised by exposure of their character and by the course of the rehabilitation of their victims. For the millions of Soviet people who had learned to revere him as a personal leader and an infallible authority, the denunciation of Stalin had been a shocking and disillusioning experience. His reinstatement presumably has assuaged the feelings of a large portion of the population.

33. The nature of the current collective leadership has also encouraged the reversion to Stalinist practices. The interests that are strongest in Soviet society, including, besides the party, the police forces, the military, heavy industry, and various bureaucracies, are those that prospered under Stalin and his system of rule. Government by committee has shown itself to be responsive to these major interests. In fact, the consultation and compromise required for a committee system to work suggest that it will be a conservative rule.

34. Once started, the reactionary drift proved to have a dynamism of its own. Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin created a psychological climate allowing the existence of at least some measure of criticism and dissent. The new regime's attempts to turn back the clock met with stiff resistance, which then required harsher measures to overcome. The influence of foreign example on this resistance further demanded, in the authorities' view, a xenophobic stance and finally contributed to the military intervention in Czechoslovakia.

Stalin as a Weapon

35. If independent reasons have led the conservatives in power both to restore Stalin's image and to resort to neo-Stalinist practices, they have also found the two policies to be mutually reinforcing. Under Khrushchev, progressives regularly discussed in party and historical journals specific "mistakes" of Stalin in economic, military, agricultural, and foreign policy. Usually these articles

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had implications for contemporary Soviet policies, and at a minimum undercut conservative objections to change. The term "Stalinist" itself became a loaded epithet that liberals could use to discredit conservative opponents. These were vital weapons for reformers who otherwise had limited means for countering entrenched interests. Their effectiveness was admitted by D. I. Chesnokov, deputy director of the Central Committee's Academy of Social Sciences, who complained in Problems of Philosophy No. 12, 1968 that "the bugaboo of 'Stalinism' is used to frighten unstable people, and to spread the idea that any firmness, any revolutionary policy, any implacability in ideology, any consistency in the defense of Marxism, is somehow 'Stalinism'."

36. The conservatives, too, can use Stalin for their own ends. If Stalin's constitution of 1936 is said to have served the nation so well, then there is little reason to update it. Consequently, nothing has come of the leadership's original promises of a new constitution that would emphasize a break with the past. The party's praise of the industrialization of the country through central planning and "socialist competition" puts a damper on the use of economic levers and incentives to spur development. Endorsement of Stalin's cultural policy and the "cultural revolution" serves efforts to regiment the artistic world, whose radicals, in their eagerness for new horizons, have called the Stalin era a wasteland.

37. Moreover, the proclaimed correctness of Stalin's struggles against "right and left revisionism" provides useful authority for combatting anyone who questions the relevance of Moscow's line today. At the Comintern anniversary meeting last March, Suslov scored Stalin for misdirecting the Communists' struggle against Social Democrats between 1928 and 1935, rather than against the rising tide of fascism in Italy and Germany. He said the error was akin to dogmatism and must not be repeated. In essence, he was discussing the propriety of political cooperation between Communist parties and non-Communist reform elements--cooperation which can only be achieved at the cost of "bending" Communist principles. The points that he made run counter to

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Brezhnev's efforts to lead the Communist movement back to uncompromising hostility to everything non-Communist and to tighten control from the "center." That this continued to be Brezhnev's position is evident in Golikov's attack in Kommunist on the theme that Lenin had not always been unconditionally hostile to all except pure Bolsheviks. The problem of reconciling Communist principles and tactical compromise remains at the base of Moscow's difficulties with Eastern and Western European parties, figures in the difficulties with China, and has implications for Soviet attitudes toward the West.

38. Brezhnev's activity on behalf of Stalin's reputation has been matched by his embrace of Stalinist policies. Certainly, as Stalin's particular heir as General Secretary, he has had most to gain by reversion. As leader of the party, he has been the architect of its restoration to a more professional and worker-oriented elite. He has led the revival of Marxism-Leninism to an all-embracing and unyielding state dogma. He has shown himself to be solicitous of the military's material desires as well as their historical pride. That such policies have prevailed indicates that the majority of the Politburo has been with Brezhnev. On particular questions, however, there have obviously been differences among individuals. For example, Kosygin, who promoted the restoration of the central economic ministries, is probably chagrined that traditional ideological strictures hamper the adoption of certain new measures of economic rationality. Whether Suslov's objection to one aspect of foreign policy extends to other portions of the Stalinist heritage is unknown. In general, however, the neo-Stalinist program of the leadership has largely pre-empted an important area of challenge for its ambitious members. Individuals such as Aleksandr Shelepin, for example, are not themselves strong enough to mount a challenge from a liberal platform and yet they find most conservative positions already well occupied.

Stalin's Legacy

39. The ascendancy of neo-Stalinism does not necessarily portend the eventual emergence of full-fledged Stalinism. The present leaders know that

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the ways of Stalin ultimately endanger no one so much as themselves. Their desire to avoid the extremes of Stalinism is evident in their rebuke of the cult of Stalin and the purges, and in their shunning of one-man rule and unlimited police power. They also show some appreciation of the havoc that Stalinism would raise in the country's domestic and foreign affairs. Although the atmosphere today is more conducive to a full return to Stalinism than in the recent past, such a development would probably come only at a time of crisis and with a change in top leadership.

40. There is no indication, however, that modification of the current reaction is in prospect. Not only are the heirs of Stalin in power, but the spirit of Stalin has a grip on the country. Were events to bring new leaders to the fore, leaders who were ready to break with the past, that grip would again have to be loosened. Barring a change at the top, the near future will probably see a consolidation of the stage presently achieved, that is, a fleshing out of Stalin's favorable portrait and a more extensive and thorough application of Stalinist principles to current policy. Especially in the arts, the freeze threatens to harden. In this sense, Stalin's legacy will continue to weigh heavy on Soviet society.

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